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House Report Criticizes Intelligence Agencies

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WASHINGTON, Sept 22 — The House Intelligence Committee approved a staff report today that criticized the performance of United States intelligence agencies in Central America in the last few years.

"The basic concern is that tendentious rhetoric, including occasional oversimplification and misstatement, can drive out some of the needed collection and analysis," the report concluded.

Representative Charles Rose, chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight

and Evaluation, said the intelligence agencies had argued against making the report public because it might lessen public confidence. He said the decision to release the report was made by a majority vote of the full committee along party lines.

"At this time, I am not accusing the intelligence community of having given into the pressure that the policy makers have applied," he said. "But there has been sloppiness, inaccuracies and overstatements that if not corrected logically could lead to the intelligence community being manipulated by Administration policy rather than policy being guided by properly evaluated intelligence."

Several cases were cited in the staff report to support its contention that there had been occasions when the intelligence agencies did not perform well in Central America.

Among them was what it said was the lack of analysis of documents captured when former Maj. Roberto d'Aubuisson, a Salvadoran rightist who is now president of the Constituent Assembly, was arrested in 1980 and a similar lack of analysis when Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero of San Salvador was assassinated the same year. This, the re-

port said, suggests "that determining the perpetrators and any others responsible for authorizing specific instances of rightist terrorism has not been considered a suitable task for intelligence."

After President Reagan certified last January that El Salvador was "achieving substantial control over its armed forces," the report said, the C.I.A. acknowledged that it had only "fragmentary evidence" on this subject and that the only sources for the statement were reports by the Salvadoran Ministry of Defense.

And in February, the study said, when the State Department challenged news reports of a massacre in the Salvadoran village of El Mozote, contending that no evidence could be found to confirm Government troops had systematically massacred "733 or 926 victims as variously cited in press reports," only in the last paragraph of the embassy report on the matter was it noted that the State Department investigators "never reached the towns where the alleged events occurred." Furthermore, reservations and questions found in a second embassy study of the event "were disregarded by a State Department analyst in explaining what had happened."